

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 9-14 were examined and reported in the Office Action. Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 12-14 are rejected. Claims 1-14 are canceled. New Claims 15-38 have been added. Claims 15-38 remain.

It is asserted in the Office Action that claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) are anticipated by U. S. Patent No. 6,264,366 issued to Custer ("Custer"). Claims 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Custer and Ishizaki (European Patent Application No. 0 941 937 A1, cited by applicant). Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 12-14 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishizaki and Custer.

In response, Applicant has cancelled Claims 1-14 and added Claims 15-38. Added Claim 15 corresponds to cancelled Claims 1 and 4. Since the Examiner indicated that Claim 4 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, Applicant submits that Claim 15 is allowable over the prior art of record. Claims 16-26 correspond to cancelled Claims 2, 3, 5 - 10 and 12-14, respectively and since they all depend from added Claim 15, are also in condition for allowance for the same reason.

Added Claim 27 corresponds to cancelled Claims 1 and 11. Since the Examiner indicated that Claim 11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, Applicant submits that Claim 27 is also allowable over the prior art of record. Added Claims 28-38 correspond to cancelled Claims 2, 3, 5 - 10 and 12-14, respectively, and since these claims depend from Claim 27 are also allowable over the prior art of record for the same reason.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that Claims 15-38 are patentably distinguishable over the prior art of record and the subject application is now in condition for allowance.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail with sufficient postage in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendments, Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on January 11, 2007.


Linda Marie Metz

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